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The Gravelle

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ADDRESS

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BY

Benjamin Harris Brewster

HON. BENJAMIN HARRIS BREWSTER, LL.D.,

AT THE

Laying of the Corner Stone

OF THE

NEW PUBLIC BUILDINGS,

PHILADELPHIA,

JULY 4, 1874.

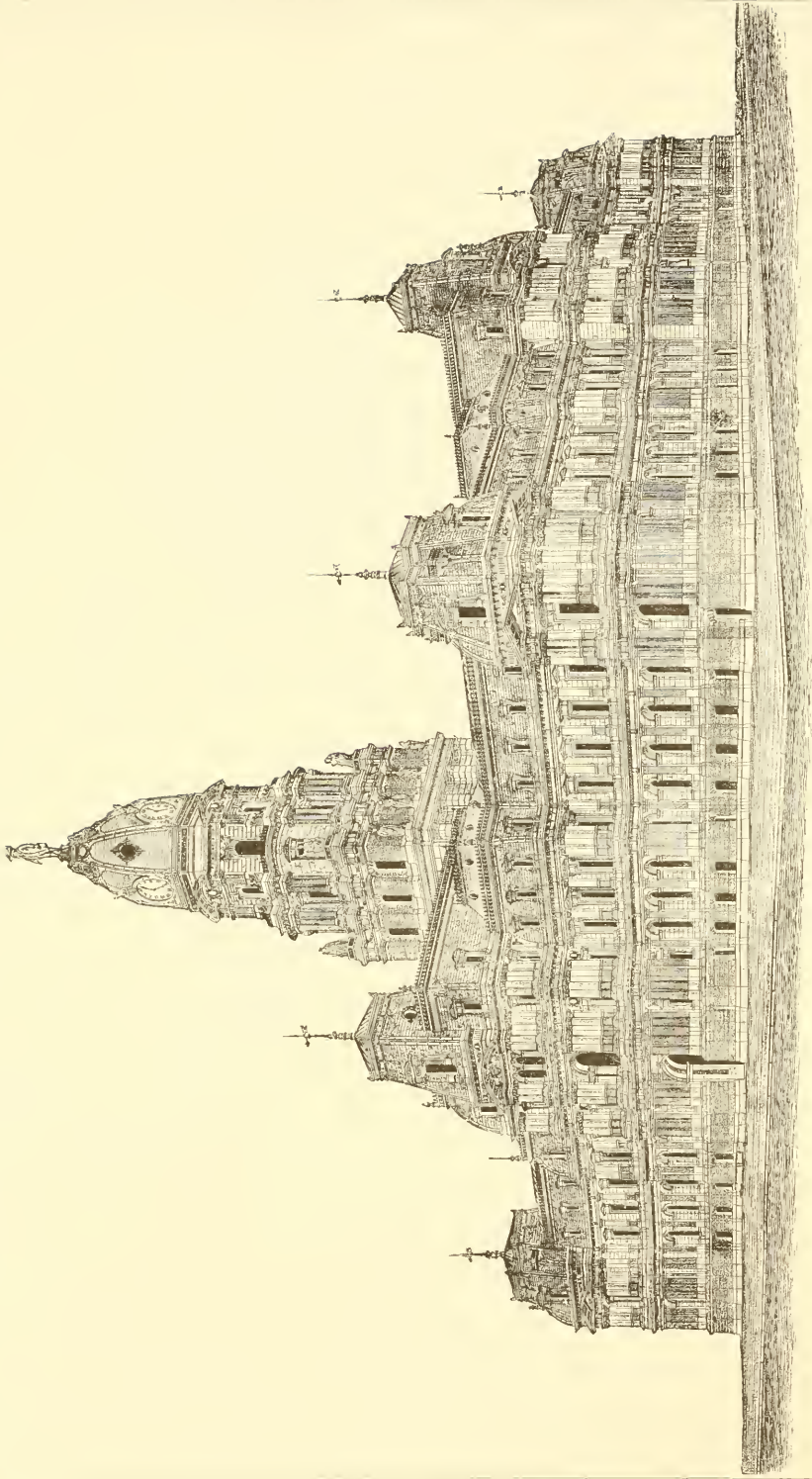


Photo-Electrotype.

1120 NEW CITY BUILDING, PENN. SQUARE, PHILADELPHIA, PA.
JOHN B. ASTOR, JR., ARCHITECT.

F. A. Wenderoth & Co. 1328 Chestnut St. Philada.

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HON. BENJAMIN HARRIS BREWSTER, LL.D.,

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HENRY B. ASHMEAD, PRINTER,
1102 AND 1104 SANSON STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

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OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONERS FOR THE ERECTION OF THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

PHILADELPHIA, July 7, 1874.

HON. BENJAMIN HARRIS BREWSTER.

My Dear Sir:

It affords me great pleasure, on behalf of the Commissioners, to request for publication a copy of the admirable Address delivered by you on the 4th inst., at the laying of the Corner Stone. The Commissioners feel under obligation to you for the research and labor expended in the preparation of the Address, which produced a marked impression on all who were so favored as to hear it, and cannot fail to go far towards satisfying the public mind of the necessity, expediency and wisdom of this great undertaking as it is now in process of accomplishment. The tone of thorough and heartfelt loyalty to your native city, and the full appreciation of its advantages and greatness which pervaded the whole Address, must have a most useful and salutary influence.

Trusting that an early and favorable response may be accorded to the above request,

I remain, very truly and respectfully yours,

SAMUEL C. PERKINS,
President of the Commissioners.

PHILADELPHIA, 13th July, 1874.

TO SAMUEL C. PERKINS, Esq.,

President of the Commissioners
for the Erection of the Public Buildings.

Dear Sir:

I have been absent from town, or you should have had an earlier answer to your polite note of July 7th. I thank you and the Commissioners most cordially for the kind manner in which they make the request of me, and with this I send to you for publication the Address as asked for.

I am, with great respect, your friend,

BENJAMIN HARRIS BREWSTER.

*At the conclusion of the Masonic Ceremonies with which the
Corner Stone was laid,*

MR. BREWSTER *delivered the following Address.*

ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN: These solemn ceremonies having been performed, it is now my duty to say some few words, explaining the history and purpose of this great public work. One hundred and eighty years ago, when this city and this province were a wilderness, William Penn, then the proprietor, dedicated this very spot of ground as the suitable site for the public buildings of his projected city. That such was his act, and such his purpose, has been judicially established as a legal and historic fact; and now we perform the conditions of the grant, and honestly apply the gift to the object of the trust, obeying the intentions of our provident benefactor.

For many years this city has been unprovided with buildings suitable for the convenient performance of the usual and necessary public business.

Before the consolidation of the city, as created by Penn, we were surrounded with outlying incorporated municipalities. Then the business of each and all was transacted with reasonable convenience in the old municipal buildings, and in the halls that had been erected in the districts and townships of the county, but even then the accommodations were wanting for the growing necessities of our courts. Year after year the officers of the county (then a separate and distinct corporation with its own organization and officials), were driven to adopt expedients to supply the courts with convenient apartments. At one time the Supreme Court was held in the Hall of Independence, at another time the Supreme Court, *Nisi Prius*, was placed in the chapter room of the old, abandoned Masonic Hall, Chestnut Street, above Seventh. During those days the necessities for such buildings for general public uses were few. Since then new and great departments have grown out of what were subordinate clerkships of public employment.

Day by day the want of proper apartments pressed upon the courts and interfered with the administration of justice. Day by day the same want crowded the officials of the city and the people who had business with them. There was hardly a county of any importance in the State that had not buildings larger in proportion to their wants, by a hundred fold, than our crowded and narrow rooms. Different plans had been projected and suggested for supplying this want. From many causes they all failed. Sometimes the fear of the cost hindered the prosecution of the purpose. Then the selection of the locality was in the way, and

then the choice of the means by which it was to be done. At last the Legislature of the Commonwealth finally resolved, and by an act, approved 5th of August, 1870, provided "for the erection of all of the public buildings required to accommodate the courts, and for all municipal purposes in the city of Philadelphia." That act created the Commission now in charge of this duty, and gave the people of the city the privilege of indicating, by popular vote, whether the buildings should be at Washington Square or at Penn Square, where we now are, and where we have this day witnessed the laying of the corner stone of one of the most majestic and useful structures that adorn, or have adorned, any city of the world. *MAY IT LAST FOR EVER!*

After the passage of this act a heated and almost angry opposition was excited; a series of litigations ensued; applications were made to the Legislature; resistance was attempted in the City Councils, and the elements of the most vehement partisan prejudices were used to frustrate the law or secure its repeal. Then some of us regretted this opposition. Some thought it too personal, too violent. But since it has passed away all are reconciled, and believe that it was for the best. Such an event, conflicting as it did, with so many convictions and interests, must excite opposition, and those who resisted had a right to be heard, and fully heard, before all of the tribunals, popular, legislative, and judicial. These contentions delayed the action of the commission for any practical result for full a year. After that, all those obstructions being removed, it proceeded to act as the law commanded, as the people had directed, and as the courts had adjudged. What we now do is the product of that action. On the 7th of January, 1871, the work was first begun, by the removal of the iron railings which enclosed the four squares or plots of ground, into which the city had converted the whole, in the year 1828, for the purpose of running Market and Broad Streets through the original plot. Before that the place had been left as it was originally set apart—one entire square—and in that state had been occupied, at different times, and in different parts of it, by a Friends' meeting-house, and by the first water-works established and used for conveying Schuylkill water to the old city. I remember the small, neat building that graced the centre. I think it was designed by Latrobe, the famous architect, who adorned our city with some of its most beautiful structures, and who left the Capitol buildings at Washington as the highest achievement of his genius. The very columns that embellished its front now support the pediment of the Unitarian Church, at the corner of Tenth and Locust Streets. The bisection of this plot, by these highways, was for the purpose of temporary public convenience, and to accommodate the rail-

ways that were then for the first time introduced, and whose direct access to the city proper was considered to be of great importance to its trade and languishing commerce. With the growth of population and the changes of events that has passed away, indeed the necessity now is to remove the railways from the thickly-peopled parts, where they are a dangerous obstruction to trade and the ordinary pursuits of the thousands who throng their crowded ways. It was at most but a temporary occupation and license, revocable at will, if it were not an unauthorized and illegal intrusion.

On the 10th of August, 1871, the ground was broken by John Rice, Esq., then president of the Board of Commissioners, and the first stone of the foundation was laid at 2 o'clock, P. M., on the 12th day of August, A. D. 1872. The closing of the streets and placing the building in the centre of the plot was the subject of much discussion in the Commission itself. By some it was wished that the streets should remain open, and the four plots should each contain a structure; but the final resolution of the Commission was, and is, to place it and keep it where it was intended by Penn that it should be put—in the centre of the whole ten acres. And with this conclusion, I believe, most men now concur. It is the only place where a building of suitable dignity can stand to display its parts in all the beauty of their architectural effect. It will adorn, and not blemish, the highways at whose intersection it is placed, and it will give an air of majesty and grandeur to these long and broad avenues. It is not put in a corner, hidden from view, but it stands out in bold and high relief, commanding admiration. It is placed, as other and similar great structures are, as the centre of human concourse from which all things radiate and to which all things converge. It is surrounded by a grand avenue 135 feet wide, on the southern and eastern and western fronts, and 205 feet wide on the northern front. Neither the view nor way is hindered by it. The view is improved, the effect being magnified—and the way is widened into open spaces of unusual dimensions, but of proportions that harmonize with the magnitude of the building, and answer the convenience of the multitude that will be drawn here to transact public and private affairs. Had the buildings been divided and placed on the four squares, the cost would have been increased and their beauty lost, while the inconvenience to the public would have been great, and the expense of maintaining them with light and heat and water, and the other necessaries, would have been largely multiplied. The highways would have been smaller and narrower and less convenient. In this, as in all that has been done, these Commissioners have wisely followed, not forced, the general public judgment. Mr. John

McArthur, Jr., of this city, who had before this been engaged in preparing all the previous plans, which had been the subject of public consideration for many years, was chosen the architect, and his plan adopted. That has been submitted to the public, and it, too, has been justly applauded and approved. I shall not here undertake to describe it by a multitude of words, which can only degenerate into mere rhetorical expletives, and would therefore be unsuitable as well as vulgar. This much, however, I must speak. It is suited for its purpose, it is of sufficient size to answer future wants. It is admirable in its ornaments, while the whole effect is one of massive dignity, worthy of us and our posterity.

I will here give the dimensions, and a few of the details of this remarkable structure. It is 470 feet from east to west, and $486\frac{1}{2}$ feet from north to south, covering an area, exclusive of the court-yard, of nearly four and a half acres. It is probably larger than any single building on this continent. The superstructure consists of a basement story, 18 feet in height, a principal story, of 36 feet, and an upper story, of 31 feet, surmounted by another of 15 feet. The small rooms opening upon the court-yard are each sub-divided in height into two stories, for the purpose of making useful all the space. The several stories will be approached by four large elevators, placed at the intersections of the leading corridors, to make easy the intercourse of citizens with courts, public offices, and departments of city government. In addition to these means of access there will be a grand staircase in each of the four corners of the building, and one in each of the centre pavilions on the north, south, west and east fronts. The entire structure will contain five hundred and twenty rooms, of suitable dimensions, and fitted with every possible convenience, including heat, light, and ventilation, and the whole is to be absolutely fire-proof and indestructible. All of the departments now existing will be abundantly supplied, and a vast amount of surplus room will be left for judicial and other city archives, as well as afford room for all of our growing wants. This is as it ought to be. We provide for the present urgent wants, and protect the people hereafter from those inconveniences under which we now suffer, and which expose our records to ruin and decay, while they seriously obstruct and hurt all branches of business and public duty. It is computed that the entire cost of this work will be near ten millions of dollars, and that it will be completed in ten years from the day when the first spadeful of earth was removed.

To judge of its massive size, I will give you an account of what materials have been consumed in constructing the foundation and the parts of the superstructure you now see before you: 74,000 cubic feet

of cement concrete, 636,400 cubic feet of foundation stone, 8,000,000 bricks, 70,000 cubic feet of dressed granite, and 366 tons of iron, including floor beams.

The excavation for the cellars and foundations required the removal of 141,500 cubic yards of earth. A large quantity of the marble for the superstructure has been prepared, and the corner stone is the first block that has yet been set in the building. Here I will end my details. To be more minute would be tedious and prolix ; but this much should be given to properly advise the public.

Let me state with accuracy to what purposes the building will be devoted, and who will occupy it the day it is ready for public use, that you may see and know what are our wants.

The Mayor will require for the use of his office and of the police at least twelve commodious rooms.

The City Council Chambers and their officers will need . . .	15
The City Treasurer,	3
The City Controller,	5
Law Department,	9
Water Department,	7
Highways, Bridges and Sewers,	4
Survey Department,	4
Markets and City Property,	2
Building Inspectors,	2
Boiler Inspectors,	2
Health Office,	6
Fire Department,	4
Receiver of Taxes,	5
Police and Fire-alarm Telegraph,	2
Guardians of the Poor,	3
Port Wardens,	2
City Commissioners,	6
Coroner,	4
Girard Estates,	2
Board of Education,	6
Gas Office,	1
Park Commissioners,	1
Board of Revision,	4
Collector of Delinquent Taxes,	3
Courts, 13 rooms, with accommodations for the Prothonotaries and Clerks, for the Law Library, witness and jury rooms, and District Attorney.	
Recorder of Deeds,	4
Register of Wills,	4
Sheriff,	4

At this time the city rents apartments for the Recorder of Deeds, in

the Philadelphia National Bank ; for the City Controller and Treasurer, in the Girard Bank ; the Law Buildings on Fifth Street, for the Law Department ; of the American Philosophical Society, for the Water Department ; and for the Survey Department, in No. 224 South Fifth Street ; in No. 723 Arch Street, for the Tax Office and Board of Revision ; and the southwest corner of Fifth and Walnut Streets for the Department of Markets and City Property ; and for these insecure and unsuited places it pays a rent of \$41,300. These I mention that it may be known and seen how scattered, costly and unfit are our present accommodations for public purposes.

It will now be proper for me to speak a few words of the extent of our City of Homes, as it has been called,—of its large accommodations for its people,—of its great public improvements for public necessities and private comfort. This I will do in a cursory way, as the occasion and the time will not admit of precision and detail ; but it should be done, to show how fit this structure in all its magnitude of dimensions is for the community it is intended to supply, and how it harmonizes in all things with that which we have around us and about us in daily use, and how essential it is to construct it as it is designed, if we are to have a provident regard for the manifest wants of the future. I have seen and lived in almost all of the capitals of Europe, and I have read of all of the great cities of the world ; but I have never seen or read of such a city as this is. There is no town in the world, of its dimensions or population, and there never has been one, that possesses such accommodations for its people.

Artisans, and even laborers live with us as they never lived before. Men whose daily earnings in other cities will hardly sustain life and provide a shelter for themselves and their families, except in the most rude, coarse, scanty and crowded way, are here the occupants of single and comfortable dwellings, and thousands of them the owners of their own houses.

The effect of this upon the mental and moral condition of the citizens is evident, even to transient visitors. We have no such class here as the poor workingman ; our city is filled with workmen, independent, prosperous freemen, who bring up families of boys with habits of thrift and industry, to go out into life prepared and resolved to earn homes, because they have enjoyed them in their happy childhood, and with good girls, who are certain of provision for life with a comfortable house for their families, because they are trained to keep those homes with tidiness and economy, and because they are raised with a race of men who honor and love their families, and find their only sense of content in the cultivation of the domestic affections. This is true, every word of it true, of Philadelphia and its workmen. At the beginning of the year 1873,

we had 134,740 buildings of all kinds. Of these 124,302 were dwelling houses, occupied by families. They exceed the following cities by the following numbers :

New York, by over	60,000
Brooklyn, by over	78,000
St. Louis, by over	84,000
Baltimore, by over	83,000
Chicago, by over	79,000
Boston, by over	94,000
Cincinnati, by over	99,000

This city has a population of near 800,000, and they live in an area of $129\frac{1}{8}$ square miles. It has 1000 miles of streets and roads opened for use, and over 500 miles of these are paved. It is lighted by near ten thousand gas lamps. The earth beneath conceals and is penetrated by 134 miles of sewers, over 600 miles of gas mains and 546 miles of water pipes. We have over 212 miles of city railways, and near 1794 city railroad cars passing over these railroads daily, 3025 steam boilers, over 400 public schools, with suitable buildings, and over 1600 school teachers, and over 80,000 pupils. We have over 34,000 bath-rooms, most of which are supplied with hot water, and for the use of the water, at low rates, our citizens pay more than a million of dollars annually. We have over 400 places of public worship, and accommodations in them for 300,000 persons.

We have near 9000 manufactories, having a capital of \$185,000,000, employing 145,000 hands, the annual product of whose labor is over \$384,000,000. We exported in 1873, in value, over \$34,000,000, and we imported in value over \$26,000,000. The amount paid for duties in gold was near eight millions and a half. The real estate, as assessed for taxation, was over \$518,000,000, and we collected near \$9,000,000 for taxes. Our funded debt, including the gas loan, in January, 1873, was \$51,697,147 67, and our annual outlay in 1873, inclusive of interest on our debt, was \$7,726,123. We have parks and public squares, and Fairmount Park, which is one of them, contains 2991 acres, and is one of the largest parks in the world, and was enjoyed in 1873 by near 3,000,000 of people.

From this we can understand for whom we are now building, and why the outlay proposed is provident and necessary. We can also see in a partial way where our money has gone, but we can see with sufficient fullness how providently and judiciously most of it has been expended, when we behold this list of stupendous improvements, millions of which lie beneath the surface of the earth, and millions of which we drive

over and walk over, unheeding the cost of the conveniences and comforts we are daily using in the paved, curbed, watered, drained and lighted highways, on which front, for over 2000 miles, 124,302 neat and comfortable homes. I said, we can see in a partial way where our money has gone, because near twelve millions of the debt was incurred for the expenses of the civil war. But even that we can see and value, when, as the fruit of it, we can behold around us not only our own comfortable and peaceful homes, but we feel by its outlay, made with generous prodigality in such a cause, that we have saved a country and a free home for ourselves and for others in this land, and in foreign lands; and we feel that we have also shown, that a republic can "maintain a perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty for themselves and their posterity."

Of all the cities in this nation, Philadelphia is pre-eminently American. Philadelphia's characteristics and customs, the habits and peculiarities of the people, are essentially American. The vast body of its population is chiefly the product of its own people, who were here almost from the beginning. The descendants of the men who were here at its foundation, and were here at the outbreak of the Revolution, are the men who now compose the body of its citizens, who do its work, carry on its trades, make its ordinances, control its offices, own its property, and fill the stations of public usefulness and dignity. We are not governed by strangers, and have never been willing to submit to such rule. We have a manly local pride of citizenship; other seaboard cities are provincial, or filled with strangers from other parts of the nation and from other countries; and the Western cities are, like New York, the homes of new men from old places.

If a foreigner were to ask me, where will I find a real American, untouched in his character and nationality by the ever-drifting tide of emigration, domestic and foreign, and with no taint of provincial narrowness, I would say, go to Philadelphia, and there you will find just such men and women by the hundreds of thousands. There you will find a provident, steadfast race, the sons for over six generations of provident, steadfast ancestors; real Americans, bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh. Early in our career we commanded the foreign and domestic commerce of the colonies, and till 1820 this city was the commercial metropolis of the country. For a time that ascendancy passed away, and New York, by her internal improvements, acquired the trade we had lost. While we thus ruled, we ruled grandly, and we have never forgotten our dignity. The sentiment that then prevailed with

our people still prevails. Then they embellished our city with works of architecture, equalled nowhere in the Union in beauty and fitness. We then possessed nearly all of the public buildings and public works of the land, and they were objects of admiration. Strangers came from a distance to see them and enjoy them. The Fairmount Water Works, the old Bank of Pennsylvania, the old Bank of the United States (now the Girard Bank, both the works of Latrobe), the new Bank of the United States (now the Custom House), and the Exchange and the Mint of the United States, and the Naval Asylum (the works of Strickland), the old Philadelphia Bank, and such like, were scattered over our city, then small in its dimensions and population. Even in the earlier days we were not unmindful of what was due to good taste in the erection of our public structures, as well as in our beautiful private mansions that then stood surrounded with groves of trees adorning the town and country homes of our cultivated and wealthy colonial gentry and merchants. Let any one but step into Christ's Church, even as it is now changed by the renovating hand of modern improvement, and he will there see the remains of a harmony, simplicity, and fitness of adornment that indicates a high standard of just taste. And there is also the State House, in Chestnut Street. Enter the great hall that leads to the Hall of Independence and to the tower, on which is built the steeple, and there will be seen a passage of modest dignity, and a broad, well-constructed stairway, showing that even in those days, over one hundred and twenty years ago, when it was built, surrounded with the forest trees, and out of town—in those simple days our ancestors had provided, as we provide, for the future and for public purposes, with a liberal hand, regarding taste as well as utility. Let us not forget the Pennsylvania Hospital in Pine Street, with its spacious grounds and its lofty, stately main building, at this day an object of admiration for its size and its proportions, so suited for its purpose, and so simple in its quiet, harmonious beauty.

All this we still have; and, further, we have the Girard College, with other grand and elegant structures that are the work of our own days. I will not speak of them in detail; time will not permit me to describe the rows of new residences that adorn our streets, or the costly and stately churches that are scattered in every quarter of the town. You have the great Masonic Temple and three beautiful churches that cluster round this very spot. I can remember well when but two steeples rose above our town; now, as you gaze from the summits in the Park, the city lies before you with a number of lofty domes and sky-piercing spires. These are the work of private enterprise and bounty.

We must not omit to remember the great gift the city has this day bestowed upon her people. To-day the Girard Avenue Bridge was delivered over to the authorities, and is now possessed by all of us. It is a work of wonderful merit, and is well worth the millions spent on it. It is an avenue worthy of any of the greatest cities of the world. It contributes to our convenience and prosperity, while it bears witness to our pride and liberality of feeling in all that concerns the common and public good. In our growth we live up to the example of our ancestors, and have resolved now that for our present necessities, and according to the abundance of our means, we will adorn our city as it was adorned of old, with a structure that will fully answer its end, and command the admiration of all men.

Such is my love for and faith in this city, that I feel possessed with a conviction, which might even be called a superstition, that it will again be, as it once was, the real metropolis of the nation. The capital and the public offices of the Union will never return; the foreign trade may cluster at New York as it does in Liverpool; but Philadelphia will be again, as she first was, the real centre of finance, of commerce, and wealth. She is at the head of the mechanic arts and of manufacturing, and she has ever led in refinement, in science, and in jurisprudence. The material supremacies which left her will return, and those graces and glories which she has ever had will never leave her. Here they made their home, where Penn, the greatest of all the founders of free commonwealths, demonstrated that liberty, the largest liberty, was compatible with obedience to law, and a colony, established to maintain the firmest of religious convictions by the strictest of sects, could protect all other beliefs.

This wisdom he transmitted to our people, and as a body they possess it to this hour as a spirit or living public soul, and it is that which has made us just what we are, and for which we are and have been conspicuous in all of our public history. In the Revolution, when we had most to lose, we were first in action, and faithful to the end, enduring all things, hoping all things, believing all things for the love of that Christian liberty which was a part of our blessed faith. In those sad days, here came, as to a common centre, all of the wise and brave who guided and led in that contest. Here the Continental Congress sat, here the Declaration of Independence was written, executed and proclaimed. After the Revolution, here George Washington presided over the deliberation of the Constitutional Convention; and here, too, he administered to the end of his official life the Government he had helped to form for the country he had saved. How thickly the memories of these events, our great events of the past, press on me! How the

names of the wise and good and mighty rise up before me, and tempt me to enlarge upon the history of the grand things done, and of the men who did them. I mean those who belonged to us, who were Philadelphians, but whose fame is so large that men remember them only as belonging to mankind. We have had Penn and Franklin and Rittenhouse and Rush and Godfrey and Bartram, whose names posterity will not willingly let die. Penn and Franklin are names that never will be forgotten; they will pass down through time linked with Solon and Lycurgus, Pythagoras and Archimedes and Socrates and Plato and Aristotle, the crowned monarchs of human thought. But I must here pause. I have well-nigh done all that was required of me. I must not wander off, tempted by these proud thoughts of our proud citizenship. I never approach a great building but with a sense of awe. Mechanically I lift my hat, as if I stood in the august presence of something grand and good. I can understand why men have imputed spiritual gifts to the masters of this the greatest of all arts.

For in it all science and all art unite to produce sublime and almost supernatural results. Solomon, the wisest of men, thus illustrated the highest reaches of his superhuman genius, and the greatest achievement of the chosen people was the vast temple built by that monarch and dedicated to the service of Jehovah. Go where you will on the face of the earth, you will there find these grand works of nations now dead and perished from the memory of men. Those who made them had immortal souls; but for this life they were mortal, and are no more remembered of men; and yet thus their history is recorded and remembered in monuments that were the works of their minds and hands—monuments that stand like great books written in the very rocks they are built upon. Where no such monuments are to be found the people had no mental or moral natures above the faculties of brutes. Wherever a nation had a conscience and a mind, there it recorded the evidence of its being in these the highest products of human thought, human knowledge, and human will.

It has been well said that architecture rests on two ideas—the natural, or the idea of order; the supernatural, or that of the infinite. In these various monuments of by-gone ages these thoughts are displayed according to the genius of the people.

“In Greek art order directs and guides the natural and rational idea. The strong column elegantly grouped, bearing at its ease a light pediment—the weak rests on the strong; this is logical and human. Gothic art is supernatural—superhuman—it is born of the belief of the miraculous and poetic. The geometry of beauty bursts brilliantly forth in the

type of the Gothic architecture in the Cathedral of Cologne. To whom belonged the science of numbers, this divine mathematics? To no mortal man did it belong, but to the Church of God. Under the shadow of the Church in chapters and in monasteries—the secret was transmitted together with instructions in the mysteries of Christianity. The Church alone could accomplish these miracles of architecture. She could often summon a whole people to complete a monument. A hundred thousand men labored at once on that of Strasbourg, and such was their zeal that they did not suffer night to interrupt their work, but continued it by torchlight. Often, too, the Church would lavish centuries on the slow accomplishment of a perfect work.”

The original and brilliant historian and thinker, whose words I have just repeated, citing them as the evidence of an observer, philosopher, and critic, conveys to us, in his clever sentences, those truths which illustrate and account for some of the most marvellous products of this mighty art. He reminds us that when pious zeal inspires, it passes beyond the mere love of order and fitness, and soars into the very empyrean of the miraculous and poetic. What a grand thing is it thus to perpetuate such sublimities of thought and feeling in monuments as everlasting as the hills, and as spiritual in their influence on the human soul! This is what we are doing. We are erecting a structure that will in ages to come speak for us as with “the tongues of men and angels.” This work which we now do, as it were, in the morning hour of our being, will, probably, like the broken arch of London bridge fancied by Lord Macaulay, in some far off future day be all that remains to tell the story of our civilization, and to testify to the dignity and public spirit of our people.

What we thus give we must give with free spirit, not grudgingly, for as we are of great and good beginnings, and have been an earnest and noble race of men, so should we make this our monument tell the world and posterity how provident we are; how, scorning ugliness as we do vice, we resolve thus to speak to men as it were in words of marble, that in their order are logical and human, and in their form reach to the miraculous and poetic.

We have done and are doing a great, great work, and it will inspire our posterity to live up to our standard, as we are inspired to live by the standard of our ancestors. They loved their town with a gentle fondness that is testified by every act of their useful and remarkable public lives, and they transmitted to us, their sons, the same soft sense of affection. We, too, can say, as Franklin said when writing of his home—dear, dear Philadelphia. Do we not say it in enduring words with this day’s work, and when we leave behind us this noble building to say it for us?

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